

Annual Report 2023-2024



A STEM PROGRAM

SMILE

Science and Math Investigative
Learning Experiences

The SMILE Program seeks to improve the educational outcomes of underrepresented and underserved students by giving them confidence in their academics and life skills in order to pursue higher education and career opportunities of their choice. Our work supports the University of Rhode Island’s initiatives to achieve the enrollment of a talented and diverse community of students, as well as increase first-year retention of freshmen by focusing on college preparedness of underserved pre-college students who are in grades 4 – 12. Our success is thanks to our dedicated team of SMILE staff members, club teachers/leaders, school administrators, college faculty, graduate and undergraduate students, and community members



Table of Contents	
Letter from the Director	3
Our Reach	4
Participants	5
Year in Review	6
Partnerships	8
Sponsors	9
Executive Board & Recognition.	10
Success/Alumni.	11

MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Carol M. Englander
Executive Director

Dear Friends and Supporters of The SMILE Program,

It has been a wonderful 30th year of SMILE. We have 433 Rhode Island students participating in the program this year at the elementary, middle and high school levels from six school districts, with students from Central Falls, Newport, South Kingstown, Westerly, West Warwick, and Woonsocket. Parents and administrators enjoyed the fall district Family Science Nights led by students and organized by teachers. The students were the teachers of activities, and parents, impressed with their children's learning, became more committed to their student's aiming for higher education. It has been a most rewarding year, culminating in the graduation of 15 SMILE high school seniors, most of whom are planning to attend college this fall. Two of those seniors, from Woonsocket High School, are the valedictorian in SMILE for 9 years, and going to Harvard, and salutatorian, in SMILE for 3 years, and going to Georgia Tech. SMILE students who have been in SMILE for 3 or more years are eligible for a \$500 SMILE college scholarship, inspired by Saul Nulman, a SMILE supporter, who said "Dreams, determination, and discipline will make you succeed." Their accomplishments make us so proud. Not every student remains in SMILE through his or her senior year. There are 334 students who have been in SMILE for one or more years who will graduate this year whose college attendance we will track. The SMILE Program continues to be Rhode Island's only STEM pipeline for helping diverse students develop their identity and competence as scientists in preparation for college. SMILE alumni students select STEM majors at the University of Rhode Island at a 70% rate, well above the national average of 14%. Our middle school students had the opportunity to explore engineering and technology at the University of Rhode Island through a crane and magnetically levitated design, build, and test challenge, and SMILE high school students designed, built and tested cooling submarine compartments. They did these activities at the University of Rhode Island, assisted by URI students, faculty and industry mentors. They gained confidence, new skills and a deepening awareness of what it is like to be a college student. Elementary students were engaged in environmental activities: 4th and 5th grade Elementary students came to URI Kingston campus for an Ecology Field Day mentored by URI students. For students who will be first in their family to go to college, these are wonderful first university experiences. Through stewardship projects, SMILE students have even greater positive connections to their community and environment. These include making school yard bird houses, making cloth bags to replace plastic ones, mosquito traps, gifts from recycled materials, removing invasive plants from a local park, and designing, digging and planting school and community gardens. Your support and efforts on behalf of all our SMILE students has an incredible positive effect. We appreciate and thank all of you for promoting The SMILE Program and look forward to our 31st year bringing STEM activities to Rhode Island's deserving and enthusiastic children.

Sincerely,

Carol Englander

OUR REACH



CENTRAL FALLS

Ella Risk Elementary School
Calcutt Middle School Central
Falls High School

NEWPORT

Claiborne Pell Elementary
Thompson Middle School
Rogers High School

SOUTH KINGSTOWN

Peacedale Elementary
Curtis Corner Middle School
South Kingstown High School

WESTERLY

Westerly Middle School
Westerly High School

WEST WARWICK

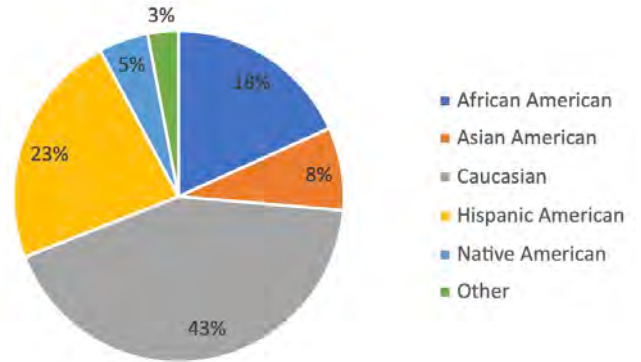
Horgan Elementary School
Deering Middle School
West Warwick High School

WOONSOCKET

Globe Elementary
Coleman Elementary
Citizens Elementary School
Woonsocket Middle School at
Hamlet
Woonsocket Middle School at
Villa Nova
Woonsocket High School

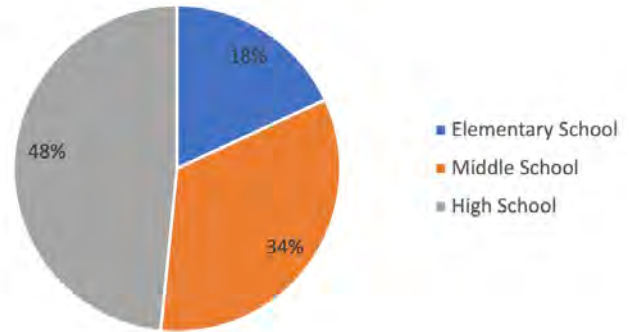
STUDENTS BY ETHNICITY

African American	79	18.2%
Asian American	35	8.1%
Caucasian	185	42.7%
Hispanic American	100	23.1%
Native American	21	4.9%
Other Minority	13	3%



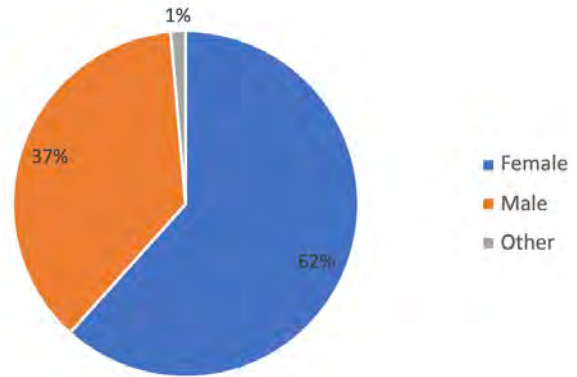
STUDENTS BY GRADE LEVEL(2+ Years)

Elementary School	34	18%
Middle School	63	34%
High School	91	48%



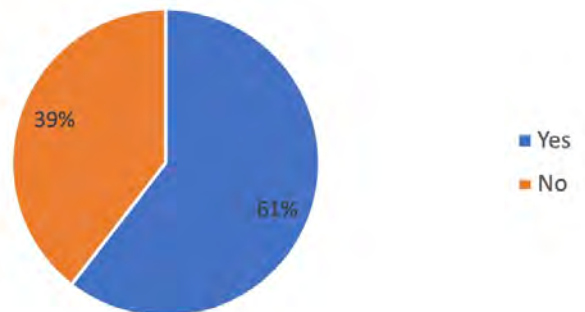
STUDENTS BY GENDER

Female	267	62%
Male	160	37%
Other	6	1%



STUDENTS BY FREE/REDUCED LUNCH

Yes	262	60.5%
No	171	39.5%



YEAR IN REVIEW



SMILE Teachers' Workshops

(August 2023 and January 2024)

There were two teachers workshops that happened in the year, one in August and the other in January of 2024. In the August workshop, teachers were given presentations as well as supplies to practice the club activities for the fall. The January Workshop focused on the spring curriculum. There were three sessions held for elementary, middle, and high school. Each included hands-on activities that the teachers participated in in order to best prepare for the upcoming events.

SMILE Career Exploration Field Trips 2023-24

Field trips this year included URI's East Farm Apple Orchard, the Norman Bird Sanctuary, Block Island, and the Roger Williams Zoo and Botanical Gardens. Students were able to learn about a variety of STEM topics including ecosystems, as well as STEM careers.



Middle School Engineering Challenge

On March 28th, 2024, students from 7 middle schools across Rhode Island made the trip to URI to partake in the Middle School Engineering Challenge. The challenge presented to the students was to design and build a crane and a maglev train. Around 100 students were split into 16 teams. There was a ice breaker, followed by the first job of creating a design for the crane. They then took a well deserved break to eat lunch, and then it was right back into working to build the crane and maglev. Students got a chance to learn about magnetic levitation and towards the end there was a March Madness bracket where students competed to see who could use their crane to lift the maglev and run it down a set of magnetic tracks the fastest. Students were also able to explore URIs campus, visiting the STEM buildings such as Beaupre, CBLS, and Fascitelli, our chemistry, biology, and engineering buildings.

"My favorite part is going around and doing stuff I usually wouldn't do in regular classes"

-SMILE Student

"We appreciate the enrichment it provides beyond the standard STEM curriculum. Our daughter loves the program!"

-SMILE Parent

High School Engineering Challenge

SMILE high school students from six RI districts came to URI for the yearly high school engineering challenge. They worked together in 16 teams total split in two to, each with different objectives. Group A was responsible for designing, building and testing a submarine compartment with different insulations for cooling retention using an Infrared (IR) thermometer. Group B built a fan from thin aluminum., attached to a toy dc motor with batteries, and designed and built an on/off switch. The fan was used to blow cold air from a can filled with ice water into the submarine compartment. Steven Reiman, a climate engineer coordinator from Electric Boat, presented an excellent overview of the challenges of climate control in submarines to our students. Students also toured the Fascitelli Center for Advanced Engineering, the Center for Biotechnology and Life Science, and the Beaupres Center for Chemical and Forensic Sciences.



Elementary Ecology Field Day

On April 22nd Ecology Day will take place. Seven elementary SMILE Clubs will come from all over Rhode Island to the URI campus to participate in the annual day. There are four different areas that students will visit on the campus, each with their own activities to learn about the environment. The United States Geological Survey(USGS) will teach students about the stream habitat. With their instruction, students will collect data related to the pH, temperature, and oxygen levels. Students will also be able to learn more about STEM careers. URI students will be present at three of the habitats to teach the elementary students. Students will make observations on the ecosystem and both the animal and plant life that inhabit it. Students will have the chance to learn more about nature.



Family Science Night

In November-January, SMILE clubs across the Rhode Island state participated in Family Science Nights. This event let students show families, friends, teachers, and administrators what they have learned from their clubs. There were potluck dinners and activities taught by SMILE students. Parents were proud of the accomplishments of the students and were delighted to see each station. Family Science Night was a great way for students to show their passion for STEM topics, as well as build their confidence in presenting their topics.



PARTNERSHIPS

SMILE Facilitated the Engagement of Industry, University Faculty and College Student Mentors

SMILE Teachers Professional Development Workshops

URI faculty and industry experts made presentations at the Teachers Professional Development and Workshops

Challenge Weekends, Elementary Ecology Field Mentors

American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics (AIAA)

Marine Technology Society

Institute Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE)

Society of Women Engineers (SWE)

Tau Beta Pi

Theta Tau

College of the Environment and Life Sciences Undergraduate Students

Industrious Labs

Naval Underseas Warfare Center

Schneider Electric

SMILE URI partners in pre-college STEM outreach activities.

URI Center for Student Leadership Steere Engineering

URI College of Engineering URI Talent Development

URI Graduate School of Oceanography

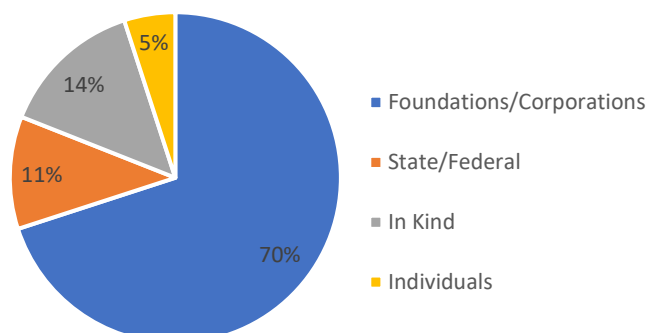


SPONSORS

We would like to thank the following list of funders that have allowed SMILE to grow and continue to provide high quality after-school STEM programming to Rhode Island students:

AAUW	Red Sox Foundation
Anonymous	Schneider Electric
Amgen Foundation	SPIE
American Honda Foundation	Steere Engineering
Arnold Lumber	Toray Plastics, America, Inc.
The Champlin Foundations	University of Rhode Island
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Constellation, an Exelon company	Verizon Foundation
Cox Charities Trust	YMCA of Greater Providence
Dominion	Walmart Foundation
Dassault Systemes	Central Falls School Department
The Gerald Claude Kirby Trust	Newport School Department
Graphic Expressions	South Kingstown School Department
June Rockwell Levy Foundation	Westerly School Department
Nordson Corporation Foundation	West Warwick School Department
Ocean State Charities Trust	Woonsocket School Department
Pfizer	
Ramsey McCluskey Family Foundation	

FUNDING SOURCES



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COLLEGE ENROLLMENT DATA 1994-2023

Source: College Enrollment by Participants in The SMILE Program
1998-2023 URI Office of Institutional Research

1. Since its founding in 1994 to 2023, 5156 students have participated in The SMILE Program.
2. The high school graduation rate for students that participated in SMILE for one or more years is between 90% and 100%.
3. The college enrollment of students who we were able to track using the National Student Clearinghouse is 67%. In 2023, 85% of all SMILE students who graduated immediately enrolled in college. Among low income students only 44% immediately enroll in college (2014 RI Kids Count Factbook).
4. Since 1998, former SMILE participants who graduated high school have attended 379 different colleges and universities with locations in 36 different states plus the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico.
5. Between 1998 and 2023, 593 SMILE alumni have enrolled at URI and 73% pursued STEM majors.
6. In 2023, 233 SMILE alumni enrolled at URI, 89% of them are in STEM majors (Note: only 20% of all US college undergraduates are enrolled in STEM according to a US Dept. of Education Report).
7. For students in SMILE for three or more years, the ratio of students attending college versus those who did not attend college is approximately 2:1.
8. 100% of the students in SMILE for more than 7 years went to college.
9. In 2021, 125 students who were in SMILE graduated high school.

The SMILE Program congratulates all SMILE seniors class of 2023, and wishes them success in their academic and professional careers.